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Title: ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS IN POLAND

SECRET

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

/ a /. Trade and commerce.

At the end of hostilities, the burden of organizing the economic life in Poland fell upon the shoulders of private industry and business. No state-controlled commerce existed at that time. The thinly developed network of cooperatives suffered from a shortage of trained personnel.

Under such circumstances, the government thought it advisable to encourage private initiative in order to meet the most urgent needs of the large and industrial centers. Furthermore, private initiative was badly needed to organize the economic life in the Regained Territories.

These conditions of tolerant attitude lasted two years, the time necessary for the government to set up a network of cooperatives and central trade organizations. The SPOLSKA cooperatives had been expanded, the Central State Trade Administration was set up, single branches of industry converted into trade associations, and sales offices established.

The end of 1947 marked a turning point in the government's policy with regard to private commerce and private initiative. Communist leaders started an offensive against black-marketeers, profiteers, and speculators, obviously meant to discredit the business element as such. Tax offices began a highly discriminatory policy, imposing exorbitant taxes, and treating every private businessman as if he were a criminal and a swindler.

Special flying squads were sent out by the tax offices to check the books and invoices of business enterprises, shops, stores, and even of poor market stands. The slightest error in accountancy, minor authentic or presumed mistakes served as a pretext for infinite harassments, fines, and other severe punitive measures aimed at undermining the existence of private businessmen.

The newly created central trade organizations have further curtailed private business activities. Wholesale dealers were refused the right of direct buyings from the producers. They had to make all their purchases through the medium of central state distribution and supply organizations.

If all this were not enough, Special Commissions were set up with broad powers to inspect and control private business enterprises. The true task of these commissions was to force trade and commerce remaining in private hands to disappear from Poland's economic life.

Increased imports favored by the government had caused shortages of many commodities. This created ^{DISCOMFORT} ~~unpleasantness~~. The party apparatus, however, was quick in denouncing and blaming private business for the ills caused by the government. The campaign of slanders flared up in August/ September 1948 when sugar could hardly be found on the market. The Communist Special Commissions then began mass searches in stores and private apartments to discover hidden sugar, eggs, fats, and other commodities. The press was full with names of alleged black-marketers, hoarders, speculators, and economic saboteurs. A few kilograms of sugar discovered by the over-zealous agents of the Special Commissions was sufficient ground for judicial action, fines, and labor camp.

The government did not unmask its true intentions. The punitive measures, it said, were directed exclusively against speculators and enemies of the state. Honest businessmen had nothing to fear. Yet the prevalent and unmistakable feeling was that the purpose of the government's attacks was to ruin private initiative. Men engaged in private business activities had no illusions as to the government's intentions. And they felt that no other alternative was left to them than to liquidate their firms and enterprises.

Impressed by the growing disappearance of many business concerns, the government decided to check the alarming trend. It ordered that any private individual intending to liquidate his business activities, must obtain a special ^{PERMIT} ~~from~~ the county industrial office or from his respective municipality. Experience had shown that the procurement of such a permit

was not a simple operation at all. On the contrary, it involved a long and complicated procedure.

In the meantime, difficulties were piling up. Distribution of goods and supply were concentrated in the hands of government-controlled organizations which discriminated against private dealers. Cooperatives had top priority in procurement of commodities and other articles, so that private business had to content itself with second rate ~~quality~~ goods. Furthermore, it was heavily taxed on the basis of the income and turnover of previous years. All complaints and protests were of no avail.

The drastic measures of the state and tax authorities spread real terror among private businessmen. Their only thought was how to avoid the heavy punishing hand of the Communist apparatus. Many of them tried to turn over their enterprises to the cooperatives for the mere price of the goods left in their warehouses. The government then imposed a special liquidation ~~fee~~ ^{TAX} which usually absorbed whatever income could be obtained from the sale of a private business enterprise. The cooperatives and state-controlled institutions were ordered not to make any cash payments to private individuals without the explicit knowledge and the approval of the respective tax office.

The present ~~day~~ plight of Polish private trade, industry and commerce is overwhelming. The streets of Polish cities present the heart-rendering spectacle of empty store windows, locked shops, offices showing no sign of activity. The doors and windows are covered with propaganda signs and posters. Government offices, recreation halls, state and cooperative retail outlets now occupy the ~~once-private~~ ^{former} owned stores and businesses. The government has been trying to remove the signs of desolation represented by empty stores in the main, central sections of the cities. The outlying districts present a gloomy spectacle, ~~indeed~~ reflecting the fate of private initiative in Poland.

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It should be stressed that the state and cooperative organizations and their vast supply and distribution apparatus are highly incompetent, and what is worse, completely indifferent to their functions. Everything is handled in a bureaucratic way. Everywhere is felt the heavy pressure of the cumbersome bureaucratic machinery. And there is no trace of the very polite manners and behavior which once characterized the Polish business and salesman.

Minute, detailed planning of every aspect and of every sector of Polish economic life caused confusion and duplication. Moreover, there is a widespread tendency of shifting responsibility from one agency to another, from one institution to another. The net result are shortages of essential commodities, particularly felt in rural communities, and goods of an inferior quality.

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ECONOMIC LIFE

/b/ The Cooperative Movement.

There has been an unusual development of cooperatives since 1945, especially in the field of agriculture and consumers' goods. They had grown like mushrooms without sufficient justification. A few individuals could set up a cooperative. The membership due was usually ridiculously low, in many instances as low as 5,000 zlotys.

Once registered, the cooperatives could apply for bank loans amounting to millions of zlotys. These cooperatives were fragile economic bodies. The only reason for their existence was to serve as a weapon against private initiative. In fact, later most of these mushroomed cooperatives had been absorbed by various state central administrations.

The cooperative movement in Poland has always been under predominant Socialist influence. Because of lack of trained personnel, the Communists had no other choice but to tolerate this state of affairs. At present, apparently they have the necessary men to place the cooperative movement under their exclusive control.

The Socialist SPOLSKA cooperatives had started with the elimination of such cooperatives as the Union of Agricultural-Trade Cooperatives in Warsaw, the Central Farmers' Administration in Poznan and the Produce Union in . Thanks to the financial aid initially received from the Communists, the SPOLSKA cooperatives could widely expand and extend the scope of its activities.

The Communists as well as the Socialists were opposed to normal elections of the governing authorities of SPOLSKA. The first because they wanted to fill the leading posts with their own appointees, the latter were afraid that normal elections might result in a victory of the elements of the Polish Peasant Party/ Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe/, the only party whose policy still reflected the genuine interests of the Polish people.

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The Communist sought to remove Socialist influences from the cooperatives and from all important sectors of the national economy. An important step in this direction was the organization of state central trade administrations including textiles and consumer goods. General Merchandise Stores were set up. The State Mills Association in charge of the milling industry was intended to reduce further ~~the~~ ^{the} SPOLM's range of activity.

The government set up a Central Fishing Administration with an initial capital of one hundred million zlotys with the obvious purpose of undermining the existing private ~~and cooperative~~ ^{ENTERPRISES} fishing cooperatives. In fact, the latter began immediately to feel the results of government pressure and discriminatory practices.

In 1948, the government decided to achieve its objective of converting the cooperatives into a Communist instrument and to eliminate the influence of Socialists. The Communist-controlled Peasant Self-Help had taken over the the SPOLM agricultural cooperatives and created central farm administrations in each principal city of the wojewodstwow. The splitting up of SPOLM was followed by another telling blow directed against the Auditing Agency of Polish Cooperatives, a controlling body of the entire cooperative movement in Poland. The latter's functions were taken over by the single central trade administrations.

There have been rumors that the State Control Office will take over the control over the central trade administrations. It is noteworthy that General Witold, commander of the Citizen's Militia, was appointed recently as Chairman of the State Control Office.

Before the war, a special " Food Supply Fund " set up by the Ministry of Supplies and Commerce, was in charge of purchases of grain. The fund was replaced by a government-controlled body called " State Grain Enterprises " with the monopolistic power of purchasing grain from ~~single~~ ^{the} central administrations, of exports to foreign countries, and of sales for processing purposes.

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There was a great squabble in the ranks of the party hierarchy for the post of director of this new outfit. The choice fell finally on a certain Mr. Gurcowski, a former clerk in a mortgage loan office, but apparently a man with strong party connections.

The State Grain Enterprise is patterned along the model of a similar Soviet institution. Because of incompetent management, it has been a complete failure and is disrupting completely the Polish grain economy.

Summing up the present conditions of Poland's cooperative movement, one may say that it has ceased to exist as a specific and autonomous activity. Its financial operations are subjected to the same control and the same methods which govern state enterprises. They do not dispose of cash or any other assets. All financial operations of the cooperatives are made by banks which exercise full control over the same.

Work cooperatives, which were very popular in prewar Poland, still exist under the present Communist regime. They were, however, purged and severely screened during the recent reorganization of the cooperative movement. Those which could survive the rigid scrutinizing are not spared Communist attacks. In fact, the Communists often denounce the work cooperatives as nests of camouflaged capitalists.

The Communist regime has also completely transformed the nature and the competence of the prewar Commodities and Grain Exchanges. Their present functions are limited to collecting statistical data of transactions in grains and commodities, which to be precise are not business transactions but merely shifting of goods from one government office and institution to another.

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ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

/ a/ Agriculture and farm production.

Although farm production has improved recently, it is still much below prewar level. Farm workers have shown little enthusiasm for land distribution. They know the difficulties facing them. There were many instances when they refused the assigned lots of land. This was the case of the farm laborers on the large farm Kowanowo.

The present shortage of meat and fats is not the guilt of black-marketeers as the government claims. They are the result of intensified exports to Czechoslovakia and to the Soviet occupation zones of Austria and Germany.

Minister Minc announced ~~in 1948~~ that the setting up of agricultural producers' cooperatives, or better to say of kolkhozes, is on a voluntary basis and that about one percent of all farms will be collectivized in 1948. No Polish peasant will ever believe that this could be done on a voluntary basis. The government uses political and moral terror on all those who are not inclined to set up kolkhozes. On the other hand, agricultural producers' cooperatives, or kolkhozes, receive all possible help and advantages including exemptions from taxes.

In spite of peasant resistance, there has been recently an intensified drive toward collectivization. It is apparent that the peasants' resistance will be broken by the pressure and terror of the Communist party and police. The Polish peasant will yield in the same way as other branches of the nation's economy did.

In 1948, the Communists imitating the Soviets, divided the farming population in two categories: small-size farmholders owning less than 10 hectares of land and wealthy farmholders with more than 10 hectares. The latter were called "wealthy farmholders" and not "kulaks" evidently not to hurt Polish sensitiveness.

The Polish Workers' Party followed by the press and government agencies then launched a campaign against the "wealthy farmholders." Pressure and terror has been used on a wide scale. Heavy taxes were intended to break the backbone of the "wealthy farmholders." Allocation of loans and credits was subordinated

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to the fulfillment of drastic conditions. Applicants for loans had to present a statement of the local gmina specifying the extent of the land, and a letter issued by the "community council", made up of party members, approving the loan.

The Peasant Self-Help Cooperatives, serving most of the needs of the Polish farming population, ^{CAV} could refuse to supply wealthy farmholders with such articles of which there were shortages on the local market/ for instance, artificial fertilisers, petroleum, scrap iron, leather, etc./ The organisation of machine centers was a further blow to those who owned more than ten hectares of land. In fact, they were ordered to turn over to the machine centers and all available agricultural machines, ^{and} implements.

The elimination of wealthy farmholders from gmina, powiat, and other administrative bodies further reduced the material and moral status of this category. There were, however, many instances when farmholders and poor peasants had deliberately put the names of wealthy farmholders on the lists of candidates for gmina and powiat offices.

Wealthy farmholders also had to pay a special tax for the "Community Savings Fund." The payments of the tax were to be made on the basis of arable land owned and paid in full. The same tax in industry and commerce was ¹⁸estimated on the basis of 35 percent of business profits and paid in monthly installments. The tax assessments in agriculture were extremely heavy and were obviously intended to deliver a deadly blow to the languishing category of so called wealthy farmholders. I know the case of one farmholder of 45 hectares of land who had to pay 500,000 slotys to the "Community Savings Fund" in the Fall of 1948, an equivalent of 245 quintals of wheat.

Land tax is to be paid in grain as soon as the crop is harvested. Failure to pay the land tax, and this is true of all other taxes and levies, is punished severely. In January 1950, wealthy farmholders were ordered to pay 50 percent of the 1950 tax. It came as a lightning stroke since land tax is usually paid after the harvesting season. They began desperately to look for money to meet the emergency, which in most cases could not be found.

Furthermore, a new drastic system of tax collecting was introduced.

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The village chief administrative officer- a hundred percent Communist -was charged with making up a list of prospective tax payers. A special commission including a village peasant, a party member, a police agent, and a tax official, visited the wealthy farmholder announcing the amount of the tax assessed and ordering prompt payment. In case the farmholder could not pay the assessed tax, the commission seized his livestock, horses, equipment which was held until the harassed farmholder could collect the money.

Under such circumstances, the Polish peasant has little interest in investments, in increasing farm production, etc. His only thought is how to protect himself and put aside a few slotys for the dark and rainy day. He has no illusions that he is fighting a losing battle and that the work and sacrifices of entire generations are being lost. There is widespread apathy and ~~despair~~ despair.

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ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

/ d / Industry.

The nationalization law passed by the Sejm provides for the compensation of owners of industrial plants, while it refuses compensation to owners of large farms. The Polish Peasant Party / Polakie Stronnictwo Ludowe / had vigorously opposed this discrimination during the parliamentary debates. Their opposition, however, was overruled by Minister Minc who sustained the government thesis opposed ^{TC} against the compensation of farm owners.

The nationalization law provides that industries employing over 50 persons are to be taken over by the state. Production volume is another factor governing nationalization. For instance, mills producing 15 tons flour daily, are also subject to the nationalization law.

The state industry is organized in trade associations subordinated to the Ministry of Industry which, in turn, supervises single factories and plants and organizes the distribution of the products through central sales offices. The entire production is governed by plans. Everything is planned. Although statistical figures indicate that the quotas have been over-fulfilled, there is a steady shortage of many essential articles. Bad production planning, increased exports, and bad organization of the distribution apparatus, are the three main reasons for the shortage ^{EXISTING} of materials and products. There has been a chronic shortage of tinplate, carbide, leather, fats, chemicals, bad covers, steel-made fancy goods, etc. The available stationery and paper is of very low quality.

There are shortages of medicines and pharmaceutical products. There are few spare automobile parts. Of the 40 automobiles supplied by the UNRRA to the Gdansk shipyards, only half of them are running. There is also a lack of such articles as iron ^{and} alcohol. Although alcohol is produced in large quantities and its price is exceptionally high / 1,200 zlotys per liter /, it can hardly be found on the market.

In 1948, there was a great shortage of pitch and its derivatives. The shortage was due to bad planning and to the priority system under which private enterprises are actually refused ^{ALLOCATIONS} shipments of pitch.

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Mines and metallurgical plants work at full capacity. The figures given in the press may be considered as authentic. This is due to the great quantities of available scrap iron. The railroad stations ^{in Chorzow is} full of carloads carrying scrap iron. Finished metal products are loaded on freight cars and shipped under the cover of darkness. Foreman Wojciechowski asked by me what articles are produced by his plant, at first refused to answer. After a while he grinned and said: "Well, the same stuff they used to put out under Hitler."

The textile industry also works at full capacity. The mills in Bielake, Biala, Lodz, Tomaszow, and Zyrardow are busy. There is no shortage of textiles, with the exception of linen, but the prices are too high for the purchasing power of a working man. The price of men's cloth ranges from 6,000 to 18,000 slotys per meter. A men's suit costs from 30,000 to 50,000 slotys while the monthly wages of a factory or white collar worker amounts to about 15,000 slotys. First quality textiles cannot be found on the Polish market. They are usually exported abroad.

Although the electrotechnical industry has been showing continuous production increases, there has been a shortage of ~~the~~ light-bulbs. Houses are not illuminated. Trains run without light.

The Ministry of Industry controls the entire nationalized industry. Political pressure, labor competition, and the quota system have forced the workers to fulfill the production plans ahead of schedule. The result of this forced labor competition and of the excessive exploitation of all human faculties has been such ~~as~~ to render the workers ~~apathetic~~ apathetic, and resigned. They are dominated by one thought to meet both ends and not to get in trouble with their party supervisors.

The plant administrations anxious to ~~meet~~ meet the requirements and the production quotas have no other alternative but to follow the line of minor resistance and lower the quality of production.

Under the impact of stringent government regulations and restrictions, the small industries not included in the nationalization law, can hardly operate. They are forced to liquidate. Their owners seek to lease their workshops to cooperatives and to find employment in their own workshops taken over by cooperatives or other state-controlled organizations.

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The possibility of turning over private workshops to cooperatives and state institutions lasted until 31 December 1948. In January 1949, all these institutions received orders prohibiting taking over private workshops on lease. They were permitted to do so under the condition that the private owner will renounce voluntarily all his property rights and compensation. In addition, the private owner was to pay the expenses connected with the formalities of turning over his property to the state.

This is the sorry end of private industrial property in Poland.

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ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Handicrafts.

The authorities mete out the same bitter treatment to small workshops employing hired labor as to the other branches of the national economy. Artisans who do not employ hired labor are treated no less leniently. But even they feel the pinch of high and arbitrary taxation.

Private butchers have been eliminated by an order setting up meat purchasing cooperatives. Artisans are told to liquidate their workshops and set up workers' cooperatives. In Polish towns with less than 5,000 inhabitants all artisans have liquidated their workshops and established workers' cooperatives. The result is that the people have to walk some considerable distances to find a shoemaker. The workers' cooperatives have neither leather nor qualified workers. Bread of the cooperative bakeries is of low quality, much inferior to that of private bakeries.

Although fishing is not considered as a handicraft, it shares the fate of all other crafts. The remarkable postwar recovery of the Polish fishing economy has received a telling blow with the nationalization of all fishing vessels ordered by the government.

Faced with the danger of losing their fishing vessels, harassed by taxes and by mounting political terror, Poland's fishermen began to escape seeking refuge and better living conditions in Sweden. More than 30 fishing vessels, one tenth of the total number, left Poland for the more hospitable shores of Sweden. They will be followed by others.

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POLITICAL CONDITIONS

/ a / Authorities .

Polish Moscow-trained Communists made a travesty of all our concepts of democracy, justice and court procedure . Every offense and ~~crime~~ ^{violation} is construed as a political act directed against the government. Everything is given a political twist and coloration.

^{military} Special courts at emergency hearings try those accused of political or economic sabotage. Political trials are staged by order of the Communist party. The prosecutor of the military court in Poznan is a Russian colonel bearing a Polish name. His knowledge of the Polish language is very rudimentary .

The entire procedure of the military courts is simply an insult to Poland's sense of justice and judicial tradition. The accused not only confess their alleged crimes but often incriminate themselves. The sentences of ~~these~~ ^{these courts} are final.

There is also the Supreme National Tribunal which tries war criminals. and a Military Railroad Tribunal passing sentences for crimes committed by the personnel of Polish railroads. The latter are still under mobilization rules and subject to martial law. In addition, special commissions set up to fight speculators can impose fines and deport to labor camps for a period up to three years. Their targets and victims are those who do not comply with Communist ~~admonitions~~ regulations pertaining to economic matters. The Communists also reorganized the Polish judicial system by introducing so called " people's courts" patterned along the Soviet model. This is another link in the long chain of terror and judicial arbitrariness now prevailing in Poland.

No wonder that these Polish courts acting on orders of the Security Department, have thrown thousands into ~~the~~ jails and labor camps. The prisons of Poland are overfilled. In January 1950, all political prisoners had been removed from the Gdansk prison and sent to an unknown destination. Soon thereafter the Gdansk prison was filled again . The notorious German concentration camp in Oswiecim has set up a branch in Jaworzno/ Polish coal basin / near the automobile highway Katowice-Krakow. The new camp was soon filled to capacity.

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The Communists set up several more camps. The concentration camp near Wleczka has gained notoriety for the dreadful, cruel treatment of its inmates.

The armed executive organs of the government are as follows : 1/ Internal Security Corps, known as Urząd Bezpieczeństwa, which is a strong and numerous body, 2/ Citizens' Militia, much more numerous than the prewar police force; 3/ Voluntary Reserves of the Citizens' Militia; 4/ Railroad Militia, and factory guards, which were unknown in prewar Poland.

Post offices, banks, government and social institutions have their own guards. Most members of the Communist party carry weapons.

The Internal Security Corps has been set up and is organized along the lines of the Soviet NKVD. It is subordinated to the Ministry of the Interior. Influential posts are held by Jews, Russians, and on the lower echelons by Poles. Security men are placed in all important agencies of the government, in the army, and in private industrial plants while such existed.

The Urząd Bezpieczeństwa, commonly known as UB, is more dreadful than the Gestapo. The charge of political crime is arbitrarily and extensively interpreted. No reason is given for arrests.

The Citizens' Militia is an outgrowth of the ~~of the PPS~~ Polish Socialist Party / militia. Its ranks are full of criminal elements. Frequently one learns of cases when militiamen abuse their power and commit crimes, for instance, the commandant of the Citizens' Militia in Obozniki near Poznan. Their educational level is very low. In fact, there are many illiterates among them. Not all militiamen are Communist party members. Many militiamen are even hostile to the present regime. The Voluntary Reserve of the Citizens' Militia is made up of civilian volunteers.

Before the war, Poland's frontiers, with the exception of the western borders, were guarded by a Frontier Corps / Straz Graniczna /. Only the eastern border was guarded by military units known as the Defense Frontier Corps. / Korpus Ochrony Pogranicza /. The Communists have created a special

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strong formation" Wojska Obrony Pogranicza ^{1/4} supplied with all ~~modern~~ modern means of transportation, to keep close vigil on Poland's land and sea borders. Polish ports are heavily guarded. Special permits are required to enter a port area. Three meters high fences were built ~~in~~ to prevent access to restricted port installations and port areas. Every measure is being taken to prevent Poles from escaping abroad. A truly Chinese wall has been set up ~~out off~~ ^{of Poland} to ~~prevent~~ the citizens from contacts with the outer world ..

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POLITICAL CONDITIONS

/ b / The Communist Party.

There is no freedom of association in Poland today. There is only one party, the United Polish Workers' Party, a merger of the Polish Workers' Party and of the Polish Socialist Party. The Communists still tolerate the Democratic ^{and} Peasants Party. Following Mikolajczyk's escape, they have thoroughly purged the Polish Peasant Party which is now a docile instrument in the hand of the ruling clique.

The Communist party numbers 1,500,000 members. Probably there are less than ten percent truly convinced Communists. Most members of the Communist Party come from the ranks of the former Polish Socialist Party. New members are not accepted. There are continuous purges within the party membership. A member's card is not sufficient proof of party loyalty and devotion. Every member is required to show "militant duty", in other words collect information and spy on his comrades, organize party meetings, party pep talks. Those who are not militant and active are removed from the party ranks. Many old Communists are disillusioned.

The following joke best illustrates the prevailing feelings of the Polish population and their attitude toward the ruling regime. The initials of the ^{United} Polish Workers' Party are P.S.P.R. The party is a merger of the

Polish Socialist Party / initials PPS / and of the Polish Workers' Party / initials PPR / . Now, the Poles say, the true nature of the present dominating party in Poland, can be revealed by removing from ^{the} initials PPSR the ~~initials~~ and from the initials of the component parties, the letter P which stands for Poland. Once the letter P is removed, we have the initials ZSRR which ^{stand for} ~~mean~~ the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics / Związek Radziecki Republiki Radzieckich /.

Despite the growing political terror and the low morale of the Polish people, they still make quips about their oppressors and use them as a target for their sharp wits.

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POLITICAL CONDITIONS

/ 0 / . Propaganda .

There has been a steady influx of Communist papers and periodicals since 1946 . Although the official organ of the United Polish Workers' Party, Trybuna Ludu, and other Communist papers are freely distributed, carloads of these papers are sent back daily to the publishing offices. The organ of the Polish Peasant Party, Gaseta Ludowa, is usually sold out. A single copy of this paper costs ³⁻ 4 slotys while strictly Communist papers are being sold for 1 sloty. The Catholic weekly Tygodnik Powszechny is also widely read . The only limitation to the circulation of the non-Communist papers is the shortage of newsprint.

Tons of paper are being wasted in an effort to communize Poland. In the meantime, Polish children have no school books and other scholastic manuals. In 1946, the Communist papers and propaganda ~~was~~ full of praise for the increased coal productivity and mounting exports of coal abroad. This propaganda could be of little effect at a time when school children had to be sent home from unheated school buildings. ~~The Communist propaganda~~ could hardly conceal the fact that entire trains with coal had been moving day and night to the USSR while the Polish population was freezing in unheated houses. Lately, as a result of reduced coal exports, the domestic coal situation has improved considerably.

Propaganda permeates the entire life of the nation. It reaches every corner. The press is full of propaganda stories to the point of boredom. Most Poles pay attention only to weather reports and non-political items. Praise of the USSR, of the Russian genius and achievements, fills the columns of the papers, but it leaves most Poles indifferent and skeptical.

The mood of the population can be best judged from the reaction to the radio broadcasts. Shortly before I left Poland, a new tenant moved in in our apartment house. I thought he was a Communist party member. I was relieved to learn that three times every day he tuned in to catch the broadcasts of the Voice of America, at 6.15 pm, of Radio Madrid, at 6.30 , and at 7.30 the BBC in London. All five tenants of my apartment house listened ~~regularly~~ ^{STATION} regularly at least to one of the three above mentioned radio broadcasts.

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Motion pictures are widely used for Communist propaganda. Only such films, Polish and foreign, are shown which present capitalist exploitation and class struggle. The legitimate stage has also been converted into a propaganda arena to incite hatred against capitalists and ~~to~~ to stress social inequities. The Communist censorship removed from all libraries the historical novels of Henryk Sienkiewicz / the famous Trylogia /, Mickiewicz and Slowacki, Poland's greatest poets of the XIX century, are presented as forerunners and champions of Communism.

Propaganda posters cover the walls of Polish cities. Their preferred theme is to praise the achievements of the planned economy. Everywhere are pictures of Marxist leaders and of ~~happy~~ shock workers. On the one hand the Communists proclaim saving programs, but on the other they squander millions of zloty in staging festivals, parades, in decorating the streets with huge portraits of Communist leaders.

The trade unions are used as an instrument of Communist penetration. In constant touch with the working masses, the trade union leaders know better their psychology and have a better approach to matters of propaganda and persuasion. They are also very adroit in selecting speakers for party rallies and other occasions.

The party cells in every industrial plant are another source of Communist propaganda. This propaganda is well organized. Unlike the economic planning and administration, the propaganda front can boast good results. Although its effects on grown up people are not ~~too~~ strong or lasting, its influence on the Polish youth should not be underestimated.

Masters in the art of propaganda, the Communists know how to reply ~~unflinchingly~~ to criticism and ^{to} silence the doubtful. Each revolution, they argue, is a long range process and difficulties are inevitable. They cannot, however, hide the fact that no political regime in Poland has ever oppressed the workers and the peasants to such extent as these false proletarian leaders do.

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/ Market conditions and labor /.

Following the end of UNRRA operations, the food conditions had deteriorated considerably in Poland. The government acting through its party cells, trade unions and factory committees, had sought to control the situation. All acts of discontent were promptly suppressed/ for instance, the strike of railroad ~~shop~~ workshop workers in Pruszkow near Warsaw, the strike of the Prosymant Mine workers in Chorzow, postworkers in Gdansk-Newy Port/.

Many arrests were made among workers in key industries. The trade unions acted as arbitrators only in cases involving private owners, but refuse to intervene when the complaints were directed against state owned enterprises.

Then Stakhanov system was introduced in Poland by a miner called Petkowski. Beginning 1 January 1949, a new system of wages went into effect. Also higher production quotas were set up. The new system of wages consisted of reducing of the wages earned by better paid workers and increasing the wage scale of lower categories. The wage increases were ~~namely~~ meaningless since they were accompanied by a general boost in prices. ~~Furthermore~~ Furthermore, many state controlled agencies and offices, like the State Railroads, continued to pay their workers and employees at the previous scale of wages under the pretext they have not yet received proper notification from the Ministry of Transportation.

The ranks of unemployed had been increasing steadily as a result of the mass liquidation of private enterprises. The newly created cooperatives and state owned agencies could hardly absorb the growing number of available labor hands. There has been a desperate struggle to find jobs. The Communist party faced with the ~~an~~ acute fact of unemployment, which it could not hide before the public, ordered drastic dismissals of all former capitalists and owners of business enterprises who managed to find employment.

There has been a general tendency to shun executive positions. The reason of this flight from responsibility is the chaotic management of government controlled enterprises deriving from the growing flow of rules, plans and regulations. The non-compliance with such orders brings the charge of economic sabotage and all its dreadful consequences.

It is of common knowledge that the Communists often use the pretext of economic sabotage to get rid of opponents or to fill responsible posts with their own appointees. For instance, the manager of State Mill No 1 in Boscoviec and two of his assistants, former members of the Polish Socialist Party, were charged with appropriating 12,000,000 zlotys. The director of an electric plant in Oswiecim, a non-party man, was sentenced to 6 months in a labor camp for the trumped up charge of "lack of supervision." He returned from the camp with tuberculosis and permanent disability.

Absenteeism is a political crime and punished severely. The threat of being dismissed and of losing work is such that most workers don't take the chance of failing to report to work or of coming late.

In addition to the regular trade union dues, workers are plagued with constant appeals for "voluntary" donations for all sorts of purposes, winter help, reconstruction of Warsaw, building of a new bridge, Friends of Service Men Association, Friends of the Soviet Union, construction of trade union headquarters and various other projects.

On payday, workers are surprised to find out that deductions had been made for the striking workers of France, Italy, for Greek guerrillas, or for the fighting comrades in Indonesia. Nobody dares to protest, nobody dares to argue..

Furthermore, workers are asked to work overtime without pay to celebrate such special occasions as May First Day, party congresses etc. They are also asked to increase their production quotas.

Indeed, one wonders how the Polish worker harassed by all these "voluntary" donations and contributions, manages to meet both ends even with the decreed 30 percent wage increase as of 1 January 1949. The price of bread increased from 300 zlotys to 500 zloty, of butter 600 zloty to 900 zlotys. A pair of ordinary shoes costs 8,000 zlotys, of better quality shoes 14,000-20,000 zloty and a man's suit 25,000-40,000 zloty.

The number of industrial accidents has been increasing steadily. The reason is minor physical resistance of the workers. Before the war, there were only 3-4 fatal industrial accidents at the Kosciuszko metallurgical plant in Chorzow. Now there is practically one fatal accident every month at Chorzow.

There is widespread misery among the mining population. Wages are low. The main emphasis is on boosting production and little care is being taken of the miner's personal safety. There is a shortage of meats and fats. The situation in October and November 1948 had reached such a point that the workers of the Przemydlan Mine in Chorzow refused to go down to the pits. The UB then went into action arresting a number of "rebels". To placate the miners and their families the government ordered a prompt supply of meat and fats at reasonable prices.

The law established a 48 hour week. In the first postwar years, as a result of the growing number of government sponsored agencies and of extensive planning, many workers could round up their meagre wages by working overtime. This involved considerable expenditures. With the beginning of 1949, in compliance with its new savings program / Program "O", the government eliminated payments for overtime work. To meet the requirements of production quotas, without disbursing money for overtime work, trade union leaders call meetings appealing to workers to donate "voluntarily" additional hours of work. Party celebrations, May First Day, the anniversary of Poland's liberation, etc. are used as pretext to obtain "voluntary" pledges.

The Communists are anxious to maintain a democratic facade. This accounts for their constant stressing the role of trade-unions. The latter, however, have nothing in common with the prewar trade-unions and their care for the workers' welfare. The Communist-dominated trade-unions are mighty large bureaucratic bodies serving a dictatorship. The chief of the trade-unions organization which has its headquarters in Warsaw, is Mr. Ochab. With the dues and "voluntary" contributions collected from millions of Polish workers, the trade-unions constructed an imposing building which now houses their main offices. The executive positions are filled by appointments. The trade-unions have set up factory committees in each plant employing more than 20 workers and have their delegates in all other plants.

SECRET

Trade union membership is obligatory. Manual and white-collar workers have to pay one percent of their wages or salaries as membership dues. Dues paid annually amount to billions of zloty. The total trade union membership is estimated as high as 3,500,000.

The advantages offered by trade unions to their members are limited: reduced admission price to the movies and priority in the purchase of commodities and other articles. There is usually a shortage of essential commodities in the retail outlets.

The only truly positive aspect of the trade union activity are rest-homes for workers. Yet strictly medical criteria are not followed in sending workers to rest-homes. In most cases it is a reward for party merits and services. Special commissions decide who is to be sent for a weeks vacation in a rest-home.

Summing up, Communist-dominated trade-unions have lost their initial functions of a voluntary association of workers to become an instrument of a colossal propaganda machinery. Labor is the first victim of this ruthless method of oppression. The protests of the Polish workers are being silenced by the constant threat of terror, unemployment, prison and slave labor camps.